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Friday, 11 October 2002, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou	(Cameroon)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Doutriaux
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Broucher
	United States of America	Mr. Williamson

Agenda

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General (S/2002/1053).

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02-63418 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General (S/2002/1053)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, the Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, South Africa, Switzerland, Ukraine and Zambia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Cappagli (Argentina), Mr. Tesch (Australia), Mr. Westdal (Canada), Mr. Maquieira (Chile), Mr. Ikouebe (Congo), Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica), Mr. Šimonović (Croatia), Ms. Løj (Denmark), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Nambiar (India), Mr. Thayeb (Indonesia), Mr. Lancry (Israel), Mr. Neil (Jamaica), Ms. Inoguchi (Japan), Mr. Ligabo (Kenya), Mr. Lamba (Malawi), Mr. Andjaba (Namibia), Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria), Mr. Manalo (Philippines), Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea), Mr. Fall (Senegal), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland), Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine) and Mr. Musambachime (Zambia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Dhanapala to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, document S/2002/1053.

I now call on Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, to introduce the report.

Mr. Dhanapala: It gives me great pleasure to address the Security Council today at this open debate, to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, document S/2002/1053. The importance of the Security Council's consideration of the question of small arms cannot be overstated, for these have been the weapons of choice in most recent conflicts, particularly those under Security Council consideration. The illicit sale and excessive stockpiling of such weapons pose complex and multifaceted challenges to international peace and stability. Failure of the world community to rise to these challenges would jeopardize many of the most fundamental goals of the Charter, in particular those relating to security, humanitarian affairs and development.

While it is true that small arms per se do not provoke conflicts, it is also undeniable that the unrestrained supply of such weapons renders conflicts much more protracted and deadly, and promotes a culture of violence and impunity. There is growing evidence of close links between illicit small arms and light weapons and both terrorism and drug trafficking. The latest estimates of human casualties resulting from the misuse of small arms are staggering: at least 300,000 deaths every year are caused by armed conflicts in the developing world; 200,000 deaths are linked to homicide and suicide in the industrialized world; while millions more suffer non-fatal injuries and crippling disabilities.

There are other costs, however, that are difficult to quantify. As we have witnessed over the past decade, civil conflicts have caused the economic and social devastation of many societies. Even in non-conflict situations where small arms proliferate, human security

stands threatened to a degree that compromises public safety and social stability.

Over the last few years, the United Nations has played a critical role in placing the issue of small arms and light weapons on the international agenda, initiating the preparatory process for the July 2001 Small Arms Conference, which adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Security Council has contributed significantly to this effort by addressing the small arms issue in situations under its consideration, and by promoting global efforts to combat illicit small arms and light weapons, within the framework provided by the Programme of Action.

The report of the Secretary-General provides a brief overview of the Council's initiatives regarding small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration. Rather than giving an exhaustive description of all actions, the report outlines the latest developments and presents 12 recommendations that are considered to be relevant to expand and consolidate the work of the Security Council in this area. The recommendations cover the following main topics: implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Small Arms Conference, recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 4; Security Council-mandated sanctions and arms embargoes, recommendations 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11; conflict prevention, peace-building and disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation (DDR), recommendations 7 and 8; and confidence-building measures, recommendation 12.

Three overriding considerations have guided those recommendations: first, the importance of sustained implementation of the Programme of Action adopted unanimously by the Small Arms Conference in July 2001; secondly, the acknowledgement of the distinct mandates of the Security Council and the General Assembly vis-à-vis the small arms issue; and thirdly, the need to take into account the views of Member States on this matter.

Let me now turn to a few key points arising from the Secretary-General's report. Over the last year, Member States have engaged in the implementation of the Programme of Action with great enthusiasm. Initiatives such as national and regional conferences, the design and implementation of national action plans, the establishment and strengthening of national structures, capacity-building in relevant areas and collaboration between Governments and non-governmental organizations, among others, have yielded encouraging results. They have also placed added pressure on the limited resources of the United Nations.

In that regard, the Secretariat intends to establish a small arms advisory service (SAAS) within the Department for Disarmament Affairs, on the basis of extrabudgetary resources. The main purpose of that unit is to enhance the effectiveness of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism and thereby to enhance the United Nations ability to assist Member States in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Operating as a permanent secretariat of CASA, the SAAS will optimize the mechanism's performance as both an inter-agency coordinating body and a service provider to Member States and the general public. I hope that the Council will find it appropriate to offer its political support to that initiative.

The role of arms embargoes in controlling the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in conflict situations under its consideration has been enhanced by the Council's decisions to establish specific monitoring mechanisms. Further improvements in that regard would require the imposition of arms embargoes on countries and regions that are both emerging from and threatened by armed conflict. In addition, it is important for Member States to enforce the implementation of arms embargoes and bring their own relevant legislation into compliance with the Charter. Coercive measures should be considered against those States that deliberately violate arms embargoes decided by the Security Council.

While arms embargoes reduce and prevent arms flows to the targeted regions and entities, they do little to control weapons already existing in conflict areas. For that reason, post-conflict activities such as DDR ought to be carried out as thoroughly as possible, and consideration should be given to restricting the supply of ammunition.

Consistent with the Secretary-General's report on "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), we have attempted to produce a short, sharp and concise document with realistic and achievable recommendations. In that connection, the views of Member States on ways and

means in which the Council can contribute to dealing with the question of small arms and light weapons in situations under its consideration were not attached to the report. However, the Secretariat will make copies of such documents available to Member States upon request.

I am sure that today's discussion will assist the Council in defining the most appropriate ways to address the various recommendations contained in this report.

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to inform members of the Council that it is my intention to suspend this meeting at 12.45 p.m. and to resume at 3 p.m.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): Bulgaria is grateful to you, Mr. President, for having organized this open meeting on small arms and light weapons. We also express appreciation for the document distributed by the Cameroonian presidency before our discussion today, which will allow us to focus on our discussions on the key questions of practical importance for the proceedings of the Security Council. I also wish to thank Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General, for his very clear and specific briefing.

As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement that will be made by the Permanent Representative of Denmark on behalf of the Union. My country agrees with and supports the main thrust proposed by the European Union aimed at guaranteeing the effectiveness of the work of the Security Council in the area of small arms. I would like to add the following comments in my national capacity.

Bulgaria notes with satisfaction the fact that the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, attaches special attention to problems related to the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons. My country welcomes and supports the comprehensive efforts of the Secretary-General, whose goal is to overcome this new phenomenon in the area of international security.

As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Bulgaria attaches special importance to the Secretary-General's report on small arms. The report reflects the initiatives taken recently by the Council and identifies the areas requiring the Council to adopt further measures in order to combat that worldwide scourge.

Taking into consideration the significance of the issue of small arms and light weapons, and in response to the request of the Secretary-General, the Bulgarian authorities have given their viewpoint on the means whereby the Council could contribute to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report reflect to a large extent my country's views.

It should be noted that Bulgaria is participating in actions to combat the illicit traffic in small arms that are being carried out at the European and regional levels. My country supports the collective actions of the European Union on small arms and light weapons. Bulgaria is also playing an active role within the proceedings of Working Table III of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, which deals with security issues.

After the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001, the Security Council undertook measures, some of which have been innovative, in order to strengthen respect for the weapons embargoes already in force and to prevent access by terrorists and terrorist groups to small arms and light weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Groups of experts and monitoring mechanisms to implement the sanctions play a very useful role in implementing those measures.

As President of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) regarding Somalia, Bulgaria has made its contribution to that process, particularly by establishing a group of experts on Somalia. It should be noted that the groups of experts on Sierra Leone and Liberia have contributed to restoring peace to Sierra Leone. The Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA has also had a very positive effect on the evolution of the situation in Angola. Bulgaria supports and respects the Economic Community of West African States Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa.

Security Council resolution 1390 (2002) was an important step in the process of broadening the scope of mandatory sanctions, including the arms embargo, beyond the territory of Afghanistan, to target individuals and entities linked to Osama bin Laden, to

the Taliban and to Al Qaeda regardless of where they are located.

Another positive development in the work of the Council that should be mentioned is the emphasis put on the importance of measures to consolidate peace in post-conflict situations, such as the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, including child soldiers. The Security Council has emphasized the usefulness of incorporating in the mandate of United Nations peacekeeping missions measures to consolidate peace where that would be appropriate.

Bulgaria is of the view that the principles and measures contained in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as the observations and recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2002/1053), provide the basis on which the Security Council, the General Assembly and all Member States must take and implement relevant measures in order to resolve the problem of the illicit trade, stockpiling and spread of small arms and light weapons.

I cannot conclude my statement without underlining the extremely important and useful role of non-governmental organizations in combating the illicit trade in small arms. Bulgaria welcomes their significant contribution and thanks them for the tremendous work that they do both on the ground and within the United Nations and other international organizations.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Let me first thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for introducing the report of the Secretary-General (S/2002/1053). I would also like to thank your delegation, Mr. President, and the delegation of Colombia for circulating the orientation papers for this meeting, which we found extremely useful.

Today we are having yet another discussion, following a fresh report from the Secretary-General setting out the serious security, humanitarian and development challenges posed by the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons. Last year saw the convening of a United Nations Conference on this important issue, at which a Programme of Action was adopted. Likewise, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2001/21) on 31 August of last year which contained several recommendations on ways to combat arms trafficking. In addition, we have had a series of regional and subregional initiatives such as the Bamako Declaration and the moratorium declared by the Economic Community of West African States, all aimed at checking the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.

Yet we have not seen any substantial reduction in the circulation of illicit small arms and light weapons. If anything, the illicit flow has increased. The current situation in Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, with the sudden appearance of a large number of sophisticated weapons, clearly shows that we have had little success in addressing this scourge.

Today's meeting should therefore aim at identifying concrete and practical ways and means to curb and to eliminate the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. We need to look beyond the classical approach of simply coming out with another statement which will remain a dead letter.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report on small arms and for the importance that he attaches to this issue. We fully support his 12 recommendations. The statistics presented in the report are very alarming. He says that 40 per cent of the estimated 639 million small arms in the world today are held illegally. Half a million people, mostly women, the elderly and children, fall victim to small and light weapons annually. These are indeed matters of very serious concern.

The problem of illicit flows of small arms and light weapons affects almost every region of the world. However, Africa remains the most severely affected continent, with certain parts, namely the Horn of Africa and the Western African region, being particularly afflicted. Those regions have become the leading destinations for illicit weapons, fuelling conflicts and causing economic decline and political instability, which, in turn, have had serious humanitarian consequences. Small arms and light weapons are also easily finding their way into the hands of bandits and terrorists, who, as we all know, are causing havoc throughout the world.

We should ask ourselves today why the international community has not so far been able to make any serious dent in the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. Several reasons can be put forward

to explain this situation. I will try to enumerate just a few of them which my delegation considers to be very important.

First, it is our view that there has not been enough concerted and coordinated effort to address the issue in a comprehensive manner. The General Assembly has been doing things on its own, and the Security Council has been pursuing its efforts on its own. There have been several plans at the regional and subregional levels as well. For example, two years ago the countries of the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa launched an initiative to combat the problem of arms trafficking. While we encourage all such initiatives, it is extremely important that there be proper coordination not only at the regional and subregional levels but also at the international level, since the problem can be tackled only if all key players — producers, buyers, dealers and middlemen — cooperate fully. In that respect, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted last year was a major step towards a global approach to fighting the proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. It is also important that the General Assembly and the Security Council work closely together to ensure proper coordination. We therefore fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to set up a small arms advisory service to ensure, inter alia, the optimal coordination and harmonization of the United Nations response on this matter.

Secondly, there is very little follow-up or monitoring to ensure that decisions and recommendations are actually being implemented. Apart from those areas which are under arms embargoes and where appropriate monitoring mechanisms exist, the implementation of decisions is very much left to the will and discretion of individuals countries. Hence, in many parts of Africa, especially where there are ongoing conflicts, very little attention is paid to the implementation and follow-up of decisions. Since we all agree that small arms are indeed contributing enormously to fuelling conflicts, it is time for the Council to seriously look into the matter and to set up some kind of system which will help monitor the compliance of Member States with all decisions relating to small arms.

Thirdly, my delegation has always stressed that arms-producing countries should act with utmost responsibility in arms sales transactions. It is important that all sales be made to bona fide dealers and that the end-users are clearly known. It is equally important that weapon manufacturers appropriately mark their weapons to enable easy identification and tracing if required. In that regard, we fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council should encourage States that have not already done so to establish the necessary legislative and regulatory measures, including the use of authenticated end-user certificates, to ensure effective control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons. We also support the idea that Member States should enter all details about the transfers of small and light weapons in regional registers and in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It is also important that buyer countries exercise full and effective control over the arms that they buy or possess. It has been documented, for example, that arms which have been declared destroyed by fire in some countries have actually found their way into the hands of rebel groups in other parts of the continent.

Fourthly, we are yet to find an effective way to deal with brokers and middlemen involved in the trade of small arms and light weapons. The greater part of arms sales, both legal and illegal, are made through the intervention of intermediaries and brokers. In the case of illegal arms deals, monitoring mechanisms in respect of arms embargoes time and again point to the same individuals or companies, which continue to operate unaffected. It is not a mere coincidence that the same names have been cited by the panels of experts on Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia. These same names also appear on the list of those involved in the trade of illegally exploited natural resources. We believe that, as long as actions are not taken against those individuals and those engaged in such activities, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons will continue and that the weapons will continue to fall into the wrong hands, perpetuating a vicious cycle.

The members of the international community, particularly those with sophisticated intelligence services, must assist the countries directly affected by the illicit trafficking to combat this scourge. Member States must maintain strict national registration of each arms manufacturer, dealer, broker, transporter and financer, even where they are arranging deliveries through third countries, and both buyer and seller must use only registered brokers and dealers.

Fifthly, incomplete or improper disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are another factor that has an important bearing on the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons. A comprehensive programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration should aim at achieving full collection and disposal of all arms and light weapons. Before the disposal of these weapons, it is important that they be properly catalogued and that their origins be traced back for reference purposes and, if necessary, for appropriate action against culprits. We must at all costs prevent the sale of such weapons by one former combatant to another. We should encourage weapons buy-back programmes, which have proved quite successful in some parts of Africa.

As of now, this objective is heavily dependent on voluntary funding. In this regard, we appeal for the support and assistance of the donor community. At the same time, we favour the idea of including in the mandate of peacekeeping operations clear provisions regarding the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, as well as specific measures for collection and disposal of illicit and surplus arms and light weapons. We are also amongst those who believe that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration should not entirely depend upon voluntary contributions from Member States. In this context, we welcome the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in his special report on the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo regarding the new approach to funding the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement programme.

Finally, I would like to touch upon the question of arms embargoes and their enforcement. My delegation believes that arms embargoes bring temporary solutions to the problem of small arms and light weapons. The Secretary-General has rightly pointed out in his report that

> "While arms embargoes help to stop arms flows into the targeted countries and to rebel groups, they do not eradicate small arms and light weapons that already exist in areas of conflict". (*S/2002/1053, para. 14*)

These weapons continue to move from one country to another, from one rebel group to another, and the embargoes themselves in some cases have failed to prevent the flow of weapons. While we do recognize their limited success, my delegation does not believe that arms embargoes represent the exclusive solution in stopping and eradicating the flow of small arms and light weapons. The problem needs to be addressed in a more comprehensive and concerted manner at the national, regional and global levels in order to ensure a lasting solution.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this meeting. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General for his report. I further wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his detailed introduction.

In recent years, the excessive accumulation and illicit trade in small arms have exacerbated conflicts in many countries and regions, impeded smooth post-conflict reconstruction and fuelled criminal activities, including terrorism and drug trafficking. They have also given rise to many humanitarian problems. The problem of small arms has, moreover, seriously affected United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations in post-conflict regions.

As a result, the international community has taken concrete actions in various aspects of the issue. Last year, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In less than two years, the international community drafted and adopted the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. These are all very important measures taken by the United Nations in this regard. We are pleased to see that, at present, the Group of Governmental Experts is undertaking a further study on the marking and tracing of small arms. We hope that its efforts will achieve positive results.

In recent years, the question of small arms has become increasingly related to the work of the Security Council. The Council's work on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in post-conflict areas and on the protection of civilians, women and children in armed conflict all involve this issue. In 1999 and 2001, the Security Council held open debates on small arms, the outcomes of which were very

encouraging. We believe that, as the process evolves further, appropriate solutions will be found to the excessive accumulation and illicit trade in small arms.

China agrees that the Security Council should continue, within its purview, to focus attention on the problem of small arms. We believe that, in addressing this question, the Security Council needs to focus on the following questions.

First, the Council's work on small arms is an important contribution and complement to global efforts in this regard. The Security Council is not duplicating the work of others, much less substituting its work for that of other relevant agencies. Secondly, weapons collection and disposal measures taken during peacekeeping operations or post-conflict peace-building must be in strict accordance with the Security Council's mandates. It is also necessary that agreements and arrangements voluntarily undertaken by parties to a conflict be respected. Thirdly, the Security Council should support the efforts of all countries and regions and encourage the relevant United Nations agencies to be involved in the implementation of its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

The Secretary-General's report contains some important observations regarding the ways and means of addressing the issue of small arms. These include the strengthening of exchanges with the General Assembly so as to promote the formulation of long-term strategies; the establishment of a small arms advisory service; and the provision of adequate resources for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. All these recommendations are very good points of reference for the Security Council's further consideration of this issue.

Of course, some issues merit further study and discussion. For instance, the first recommendation refers to the development of an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. This question was actually discussed at last year's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, at which there was no consensus on the matter. At the moment, the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms is carrying out a feasibility study on the development of such an instrument. The measures to be taken by the Security Council in this regard need to be considered after the Group of Experts completes its work and must be based on the Group's final report.

With regard to recommendation 9, as pointed out in the presidential statement adopted by the Security Council in 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21), in addition to weapon-exporting countries, all other countries also have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the flow of legal arms into illegal channels. We hope that such a consensus can be reflected in a more comprehensive and balanced manner.

With regard to recommendation 12, we believe that the feasibility of transparency in armaments is closely related to both the global and the regional security situations. The countries concerned should base their decisions on the political, military and security situations in which they find themselves in implementing — either voluntarily or on the basis of consultations — transparency measures in conformity with the actual situations and their needs.

The causes and manifestations of the world's armed conflicts vary. The Security Council should therefore bear that in mind in deciding to impose or strengthen an arms embargo or to incorporate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration dimension into the mandate of a peacekeeping operation.

China has always attached great importance to the regulation and control of the production of, and trade in, small arms. At present we are seriously implementing the measures contained in the Programme of Action. We are also actively studying the possibility of signing the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Along with all the members of the Council, the Chinese delegation is prepared to make an effort to try to solve the problem of the illicit trafficking in small arms.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report to the Security Council under this agenda item. We would also like to convey our special gratitude for the useful presentation made by Mr. Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

I would like to begin my statement by unequivocally stating Colombia's commitment to address this issue at the multilateral level. Since the

1980s Colombia, together with various friendly countries, has been a co-sponsor of General Assembly resolutions on this subject, including the first one submitted on this subject. More recently, we presided over the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2001. As a member of the Security Council, Colombia has had an ongoing interest in ensuring that this body fully assume its responsibilities and makes a real difference in how it deals with issues pertaining to small arms and light weapons arising in the situations under its consideration. The report of the Secretary-General under consideration at this meeting was submitted pursuant to the Council's request contained in the presidential statement adopted on 31 August 2001 under Colombia's presidency (S/PRST/2001/21).

Colombia has been particularly affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. This is perhaps our primary motivation in tirelessly alerting the international community to the harmful effects of the uncontrolled proliferation of, and illicit trade in, small arms and light weapons. We must also not ignore the negative impact of this issue on the peace, security and socio-economic development of many countries and regions.

While today's open debate is important to the consideration of this problem, we believe that it is not enough. We have the responsibility of ensuring that the Security Council makes progress in its consideration of this item and that it does not merely limit itself to general discussions without clear goals. We also have the responsibility to add value, to find a new way of contributing and to make progress beyond what has already been achieved. In short, we must avoid covering old ground. Our proposal has been, and continues to be, to focus discussions such as this one and to define goals. Our aim should be to find a way to have a real and positive impact on the situations under the Council's consideration that are deeply affected by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

In keeping with what has been agreed, and with the consent of all the members of the Council, Colombia has drafted a working document that will be made public and issued as an official document of the Council. In that document we suggest to the Council that it consider the recommendations of the Secretary-General on small arms and that, in so doing, it focus its efforts on a specific topic while not ignoring the importance of other issues and elements such as the ones mentioned by the ambassador of Mauritius regarding a comprehensive treatment of this item.

Our proposal is to strengthen the implementation of arms embargoes on the basis of the lessons learned from the past, in particular so as to produce effective results. In achieving that goal, we have at our disposal a wealth of inputs that merit careful consideration. The general and specific recommendations of the monitoring groups and panels of experts established by the Council also deserve our attention and very careful consideration. In this regard, I would like to refer to the sanctions regimes referred to as targeted sanctions, which are aimed at specific actors, including the Taliban, the Al Qaeda group and Osama bin Laden and his associates, as well as conflict situations such as those in Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia and, most recently, Somalia. This is an area in which the Security Council can, and should, define a comprehensive strategy and political vision that inspires its actions with regard to current situations and future risks. We want to draw the Council's attention to this matter because we are aware of the lack of effective results in the implementation of those sanctions. We therefore believe that careful analysis of past experiences and a new approach might serve to achieve the objective that the Council has set for itself in the establishment of arms embargoes.

We have received with interest the draft presidential statement that the President has circulated among members of the Council. We trust that the text will incorporate the relevant changes stemming from the statements made by the participants in this debate, including those we have just put forward.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the decision by the President of the Security Council to include this public debate on the subject of small arms and light weapons in the programme for October.

My Government is particularly attentive to this problem. We believe that the accumulation of small arms and light weapons worldwide has reached such proportions that it constitutes a challenge that the international community must face in a much firmer, more resolute and better coordinated manner.

According to the most recent estimates in the 2002 *Small Arms Survey*, worldwide there has been an increase in the number of small arms and light weapons

to about 640 million units. This increase has not been curbed by the implementation of the measures contained in the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted at the United Nations Small Arms Conference in July 2001.

The proliferation of such weapons is even more evident in areas of conflict. Yet, when used in all of our countries to commit ordinary crimes, as well as by those responsible for organized crime and terrorist attacks, small arms and light weapons confer strategic power.

Some wars are also being waged today primarily with small arms and light weapons, although they are no less devastating, bloody and destructive for that. In its various peacekeeping operations, especially those in Africa, the United Nations has been introducing, with increasing resolve, a disarmament component aimed at collecting and destroying small arms and light weapons that, in the hands of irregular armed groups, represent a threat to the stability and security of countries emerging from conflict or going through a peace-building stage.

On several occasions, however, the efforts of the United Nations, have been isolated or have been thwarted. The responsibility for facing up to the illicit trade in and production of small arms and light weapons is incumbent upon all States, not just those that are the recipients of such weapons. Indeed, those that have the greatest responsibility are the producer and exporter countries. We should demand greater accountability, involvement and commitment from them in the implementation of measures adopted by our Organization with a view to curbing such weapons.

In this context, Mexico supports national, regional and international efforts aimed at regulating the illicit trade in and production of small arms and light weapons, preventing their excessive accumulation and combating illicit trafficking in such arms. To that end, Mexico has promoted and is a party to the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunitions, Explosives and Other Related Materials, adopted by the Organization of American States in 1997. For the period 2000-2002, Mexico held the position of Secretary pro tempore of the Consultative Committee established pursuant to that regional instrument.

Mexico also actively participated in the development of the United Nations Programme of Action to which I referred earlier, as well as in the preparation of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The Security Council must also be much more resolute in its efforts. In 1999, the Council incorporated the subject of small arms and light weapons into its programme of work. Starting in 2001, Colombia has focused on the issue, taking initiatives that strengthen the Council's capacity to take action. The report submitted by the Secretary-General in this respect is the product of the work carried out by Council members — work for which Colombia provided a strong impetus. Likewise, the presidential statement issued as document S/PRST/1999/28 stressed the responsibility of that body in the maintenance of international peace and security in relation to threats to stability caused by such weapons in various fields, including disarmament, human rights, public health, international humanitarian law and democratic stability.

The issue of small arms and light weapons has particular significance in West Africa and the Great Lakes region, and in this respect my delegation has followed the work being undertaken in the sanctions Committee on Sierra Leone and in relation to the implementation of arms control measures. We have noted that the availability of such weapons fuels and keeps alive the conflicts in those regions. Such activities are also a key element in the peace-building strategies being carried forward through the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes of former combatants in Sierra Leone, the Balkans, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan.

The report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons deals with some of the objectives of the Programme of Action to which I referred earlier. It would be advisable for the Security Council, however, to make specific references to — and incorporate into the various peacekeeping operations, sanctions Committees and arms embargoes — the coordination of activities for the effective fulfilment of the undertakings set out in the Programme of Action.

Mexico supports the first recommendation of the Secretary-General on the need for the Security Council to urge Member States to support measures aimed at developing an international instrument that will enable States to identify and undertake follow-up activities in a timely and reliable fashion with regard to small arms and light weapons that are unlawfully traded. In this connection, the meeting of States to be held in 2003 as a follow-up to the 2001 Small Arms Conference will be an appropriate forum to consolidate advances achieved in this field and to make further progress.

Mexico believes that in implementing the recommendations of the Secretary-General, we should undertake concerted national, regional and international efforts, in coordination with regional and subregional organizations, to combat, prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Similarly, mechanisms should be set up to enable the Security Council and the General Assembly more effectively to share information and propose strategies on measures to be adopted on the ground that could contribute to the United Nations Programme of Action.

Mexico will continue to urge more frequent use of assessment missions to examine issues of small arms and light weapons in regions of concern to the Security Council. We need to be more active in using our technical capacities to identify the dimensions of the problem and ways to address it, so that States cannot evade their commitments.

Mexico is convinced that the fight against the illicit trafficking and production of small arms and light weapons can be strengthened through disarmament education at all educational levels and encompassing the Government sector as well as civil society and non-governmental organizations. The recent United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, contained in document A/57/124, presents a set of 34 recommendations, some of which stress the imperative need to combat the excessive and destabilizing proliferation of conventional weapons, especially small arms and light weapons. That is a recommendation that we should heed. Recommendation 27 of that study is of particular interest; it encourages international and regional organizations and representatives of civil society, where appropriate, to include disarmament education and training in their programmes in post-conflict situations.

We hope that this open debate will lead to a document that can guide the action of the international community to combat the scourge of the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and their excessive and destabilizing accumulation. Accordingly, we are prepared to work on the drafting of a presidential statement that will reflect those aims.

Mr. Traoré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): A little more than a year ago, here in New York, the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was held. The Programme of Action that emerged from that landmark meeting shows the international community's determination to eradicate the scourge of light weapons. It identifies the responsibility of a variety of players in the illicit manufacturing, transfer and circulation of these weapons.

It was along those lines that the Security Council rightly organized a public meeting on 2 August 2001 that allowed us to engage in a substantive debate of the question and to make the appropriate recommendations. My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for the quality of his report, and to convey our appreciation to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his statement.

There is no doubt that the end of the cold war and the negative effects of globalization have promoted the proliferation of light weapons. The widespread and uncontrolled use of those weapons has seriously affected the development of our States. It has intensified violence and crime, provoked an escalation in internal conflict with catastrophic humanitarian consequences. While the impact of war on civilian populations and the development of our States is obvious, the impact of small arms once a conflict is over is a source of growing concern.

In this respect, my delegation welcomes the Security Council's adoption of a number of measures as part of the fight against the proliferation and illegal trade of small arms in all its aspects. These include imposing sanctions and embargoes; establishing monitoring mechanisms; involving the relevant international organizations and institutions and non-governmental organizations, at all levels, in the implementation of weapons embargoes; developing appropriate strategies to confront the links between the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources, and

the illegal acquisition of and trade in arms; and communicating information on financial and other transactions which feed illicit arms flows into conflict areas.

Nevertheless, we must point out that implementing light weapons embargoes is the most complex and delicate of tasks given the difficulties involved in identifying the individuals involved and the services they provide.

As members know, my country belongs to a subregion that suffers particularly acutely from the proliferation and illegal circulation of light weapons. Therefore, my delegation remains convinced that in order to overcome this scourge, it is more necessary than ever to continue to close ranks in order to develop cooperation among States and to strengthen national, regional and international measures. We welcome the July 2001 renewal of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) moratorium on light weapons, and we call upon the international community to provide its full support in the implementation of that subregional initiative.

In the spirit of that moratorium and of the Bamako Declaration, my country, Guinea, has established a national commission against the proliferation and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons. Reporting to the Ministry of Defence, this commission includes representatives of various ministries and civil society, and has local offices; it enjoys technical cooperation with the competent bodies and subregional, regional and international organizations, including the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, in the context of strengthening peace and security in West Africa.

In addition, my delegation is pleased with the quality of support given to States by the Secretariat through the Department of Disarmament Affairs. That department is playing its role fully as a coordinating centre for all the activities of United Nations bodies on light weapons. We should point out, however, that those activities need to be supported through the provision of sufficient financial resources. Otherwise, the implementation of all post-conflict activities, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, will be impossible.

My delegation would like in conclusion to suggest that — in the context of an in-depth consideration of the recommendations of the Secretary-General and of the follow up of measures taken by the Council on the illicit trade of light weapons in all its aspects — we include in the mandate of the Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa the coordination of initiatives to draw up a clear road map that can strengthen the current machinery and guarantee the involvement of all actors at all levels.

Mr. Williamson (United States of America): I want to thank the Permanent Representative of Colombia for drafting the non-paper on the subject of arms embargoes that has informed our current discussion. Ambassador Valdivieso's chairmanship of the Sanctions Committee on Afghanistan, which deals with arms embargoes, among other things, has been exemplary. He has been fair, businesslike and effective, and that the Sanctions Committee has made a significant contribution to the war against terrorism in curbing the financing of terrorists and in working on arms embargoes. Sadly, these weapons are contributing to violence and suffering around the world.

The United States recognizes the agonizing consequences of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, especially in areas of conflict, where the problem is most acute, such as in Sierra Leone, in the Central African Republic — where there are three guns for every citizen — and in Guinea-Bissau, among other countries.

The United States believes that solutions to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be practical and effective. The most effective way to prevent small arms and light weapons from getting into the hands of those who would misuse them is through strict export and import controls, strong brokering laws, ensuring the security of small arms and light weapons stockpiles, and destroying excess.

The United States has one of the strongest systems in the world for regulating the export of arms, with extremely rigorous procedures. All commercial exporters and brokers of significant military equipment — including small arms and light weapons — must be licensed and must submit each transaction for approval by the Department of State. That includes automatic rifles, machine guns, shoulder-fired missiles and rocket systems, as well as light mortars. All transactions are conditioned on United States authorization for re-export. We rigorously

monitor arms transfers and routinely investigate suspicious activities. In the past six years, we have interdicted thousands of illicit arms and have cut off exports to countries that failed to comply with United States law. Individuals convicted of violating our export control laws are subject to statutory debarment, to fines up to $1 million and/or to incarceration for up to 10 years.

The United States has also been active internationally in stemming the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We offer bilateral financial and technical assistance to help countries to develop national export and import controls, to improve border security against arms smugglers and to secure and destroy illicit stocks of small arms and light weapons in conflict-prone regions. The United States has contributed approximately $100 million in assistance to improve small-arms controls in Russia, in the Caucasus, in Central Asian and Eastern European States, in the United Arab Emirates, in Sierra Leone, in Uganda, in Liberia, in Rwanda, in Ethiopia, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Angola, in Sri Lanka, in Timor-Leste, in the Philippines and in Colombia. We remain ready to continue that support. The United States strongly supports effective export and import controls, restraint in trade to regions of conflict, strict observance and enforcement of Security Council embargoes, strict regulation of arms brokers, transparency in exports, improving the security of arms stockpiles and the destruction of excess.

The paper submitted by the Government of Colombia in advance of this session thoughtfully focuses on the issue of arms embargoes. The United States supports almost all of the recommendations — both political and financial — made by the monitoring group established by resolution 1390 (2002). Exchanging information on the status of existing arms embargoes is of great value to the Security Council in deciding how best to establish and enforce Security Council arms embargoes.

The lack of success of some of those embargoes is due to porous borders, to weak enforcement and to a lack of political will on the part of national Governments. Just this week, the report to the Security Council of the Panel of Experts on sanctions against Liberia confirmed that the Government of Charles Taylor continues, in flagrant abuse of the Security Council's arms embargo, to procure weapons — including machine guns, missile launchers, mines and small arms — through black-market, illegal arms deals. That continued influx of weapons threatens the tentative stability that has been achieved in Sierra Leone.

The Panel's report notes that, in many cases of illegal imports to Liberia, the end-user certificates used as cover for weapons diverted to Liberia were all from member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). It is crucial that ECOWAS members themselves take the necessary steps to effectively enforce their own moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons. It is disappointing that only half of the member States have created such moratoriums.

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire is an example of the bleeding of weapons between military forces and civilian populations, which is exacerbating divisions within society. The United States urges the parties in Côte d'Ivoire to negotiate a peaceful solution to the current crisis. Yet the responsibility to control small arms cannot be placed on a single State alone. Côte d'Ivoire's neighbouring States — some of which are also unstable because of their own inability to control the flow of small arms — are contributing to instability by allowing the illicit trade and passage of small arms across their borders. The view of the United States is that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration provisions are an important element of negotiated peace settlements, such as we have seen in Sierra Leone, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Angola.

The United States has a history of demonstrated commitment to finding practical and effective ways of curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, such as our own strict export/import controls on small arms and the significant financial support we have given to other States. We look forward to working with other States in continuing to fulfil the enforcement of all small-arms embargoes created by the Security Council.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. We should also like to express our thanks to Ambassador Valdivieso, Permanent Representative of Colombia, for the important preparatory efforts that were undertaken for this meeting. In addition, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General

for his report on small arms (S/2002/1053). Finally, let me express my gratitude and appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for presenting the report.

Today's world faces many challenges that require a collective response by the international community to ensure the primacy of justice, peace and the rule of law. Even after the end of the cold war, we continue to witness a world of murder, destruction, widespread injustice and tyranny, where aggressors continue to act with impunity and where some stand silent in the face of the crime of occupation and the related crime of genocide. Our common endeavour to build a better world must be based on the rules of international law, on the purposes and principles of the Charter and on the resolutions of international legitimacy.

In the light of that understanding — which Syria is making every effort to reinforce — we all believe that the illicit trade in small weapons and light arms threatens the lives of innocents. It has led to the murder of hundreds of thousands of children, women and elderly persons as is clear in the statistics provided in paragraph 4 of the report of the Secretary-General on small arms.

What is required from all States, particularly those that manufacture such weapons, is to make every possible effort through effective international cooperation to put an end to this tragedy. It is also important to point out that the international community, in its endeavour to combat the illicit trade in such weapons, must deal with all States on an equal footing, without double standards or discrimination based on political considerations. Such double standards allow some countries to use such weapons with the resultant bloodshed, destruction and threats to the sovereignty and national territorial integrity of States in one region while such weapons are prohibited in other regions, despite the great similarity in circumstances.

We also believe that it is necessary, indeed fundamental, for our continuing principled support of the struggle of peoples to end foreign occupation with its concomitant injustice, oppression, underdevelopment and destruction. It is important not to form a line behind a small group that is acting to change international principles of freedom and human rights, and that is trying to use such changed principles in the service of narrow interests under the general rubric of international terrorism.

The final document of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001, affirms the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the need to refrain from intervening in their internal affairs, as well as the individual and collective right to self-defence as provided by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The implicit right of States to acquire weapons to defend themselves and to establish their own defence systems is a fundamental issue that cannot be overstepped.

Consideration of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must not divert attention from the genuine roots of conflict in many parts of the world. Many of the conflicts where such weapons are used find their roots in national, social and economic conditions inherited from colonial times or stemming from foreign occupation. This is the situation in Africa, the Middle East and many other States, particularly in developing States. Such conditions ineluctably lead to disputes that may well turn into military conflicts.

Considering the issue of small weapons and combating the illicit trade in such weapons can in no way mean setting aside the priorities set out by the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Such priorities were clearly and unanimously set out in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament, in 1978, which affirmed that the utmost priority must be given to nuclear disarmament and the more destructive weapons of mass destruction than to conventional weapons.

Syria, which continues to make every effort to defend the life, security and dignity of its citizens, is keen on ensuring that small and light weapons remain nothing more than a means to ensure the security and future of its citizens. In this regard, the Syrian Government has enacted legislation and adopted a number of measures to ensure that such weapons do not fall in the wrong hands. The right to carry such weapons is entrusted only to those agencies responsible for protecting the security and safety of citizens. In this context, let me refer to the fact that in the Syrian Arab Republic, the crime rate stemming from the illicit trade in small and light weapons is one of the lowest in the world.

In view of the importance of regional and international cooperation and interaction in facing up to the issue of illicit trade in small and light weapons, the Syrian Arab Republic has signed a large number of agreements with sisterly and friendly States in order to suppress the illicit trade of such weapons and maintain our common security. Syria has also signed a number of important international agreements in this regard.

The Syrian Government gives great importance to setting ways and means to assist the Security Council in dealing with the issue of the trafficking of small and light arms. The following are among the important aspects that may be stressed in the Council's consideration of the issue.

First, the Security Council could encourage initiatives aimed at mobilizing resources and expertise in order to enhance the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It could provide assistance to States upon their request to help in the implementation of that Programme of Action. In this regard, let me reaffirm what has been stated in many of the statements at the beginning of this meeting regarding the need for all States to respect the sanctions imposed on States that allow the flow of small and light weapons to other States.

Secondly, the Security Council must continue to reaffirm the following rights. First is the inherited, historical and inalienable right to self-defence, whether individually or collectively, according to the provisions of Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Second is the right of every State to manufacture small arms and light weapons and to import and acquire such weapons in order to defend itself and satisfy its security needs while ensuring that such weapons do not fall into the wrong hands.

Thirdly, there is the right of peoples to struggle by all means possible and in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter in order to achieve self-determination and liberate their land from occupation.

In conclusion, let me stress that the Syrian delegation will cooperate with the other members of the Security Council in preparing the draft presidential statement in order to satisfy the requirements and the tasks entrusted to this Council in preventing the spread of small and light weapons.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): This public meeting of the Council today on small arms addresses a subject of the greatest importance. My delegation is therefore especially grateful to you, Sir, for convening it. We also appreciate the issues paper you have circulated. I would also like to express appreciation, as others have done, to Ambassador Valdivieso and Colombia for the orientation paper, and to Colombia for all of the work it has done on this issue since joining the Council.

Ireland fully associates itself with the statement that will be made later in this debate by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union.

May I first express the appreciation of my delegation for the report of the Secretary-General on small arms and to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his introduction and briefing this morning. The report is candid, detailed and makes a number of important recommendations. Ireland fully endorses all of the proposals made by the Secretary-General.

Arms control activities, including combating illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, remains an essential dimension in conflict-prevention and peace-building efforts. As the Secretary-General states in his report, small arms fuel, intensify and contribute to the prolongation of conflicts. They are, in summary, instruments of death that cause over half a million deaths each year, mostly of civilians and mostly of elderly people, women and children.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July last year, agreed a modest but still worthwhile Programme of Action as a first step towards controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It also made a range of proposals for Security Council consideration and action. The Conference was, in summary, a first important step — though it was nonetheless only a step — in achieving meaningful international action in this area.

In general terms, the Security Council should offer its full assistance and support to the United Nations agencies and programmes which are active or may be established in efforts to counteract the illicit spread of these weapons. Ireland would encourage the Council also to urge all Governments to support such agencies.

Two particular challenges for the Council are worth emphasizing today.

First, the Council has imposed an arms embargo as part of all current United Nations sanctions regimes. The Council has also sought to strengthen compliance with arms embargoes through the establishment of independent panels of experts and monitoring mechanisms.

The States Members of the United Nations and regional organizations have the main responsibility for monitoring and enforcing arms embargoes. We support consideration of Council action against States that deliberately violate arms embargoes. The experience of the Monitoring Mechanism on Angola has shown that the flow of weapons from producing countries can be stemmed — particularly with the cooperation of those countries.

Many of the world's conflict situations are fuelled in large measure by the easy supply of small arms. The ease with which they are concealed and moved, their low cost and the flagrant manner in which Council arms embargoes are often violated makes it an extremely difficult task to retrieve and destroy these weapons. It makes sense to do everything possible to stop their supply at the source.

We believe that Member States have a primary responsibility in this area. Accordingly, we support the recommendation contained in the Secretary-General's report that Member States should be called upon to bring their own national legislation into compliance with the Security Council's measures and sanctions, in particular arms embargoes.

My delegation attaches importance to the recommendation that the Security Council should encourage States which have not already done so to establish the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure effective control over the export and transit of small arms and light weapons. This includes the use of authenticated end-user certificates. We know from various Panel reports that forged end-user certificates have been the route through which illegal arms shipments have been made in recent conflicts. We have to do more on this.

The Council has made considerable progress in this work, but I think it fair to say we still have some distance to go in detailed monitoring; in controlling financial sources used for the purchase of illegal weapons; and in working with business, financial institutions and other actors — internationally, regionally and at the local level — on the implementation of arms embargoes.

The Secretary-General's report rightly draws attention to the link between the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources. We agree with his recommendation that we should look at the recommendations of the various panels established to investigate such links, including that of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Panel, with regard to the issue of small arms.

There is a second challenge for the Council that we need to address. The Security Council has made disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) central to conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building. Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are all current examples, to a greater or lesser extent, of the challenges facing the United Nations in this area.

Ireland strongly supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Council call upon parties to conflicts under its consideration to place activities relating to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the texts of negotiated agreements, and that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration as well as weapons collection and disposal activities be included in the mandates of peacekeeping operations.

In summary, Ireland endorses all of the recommendations made in the report of the Secretary-General on small arms.

We fully agree, in particular, that the Security Council should call upon Member States to support efforts aimed at developing an international instrument to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons.

We also agree with the specific recommendations of the Secretary-General on more vigorous use of arms embargoes; the establishment of monitoring mechanisms under each relevant Council resolution involving arms embargo issues; and the inclusion of clear DDR provisions in the mandate of peacekeeping operations.

My delegation sees merit in the recommendation that consideration be given to ensuring that DDR activities are not entirely dependent upon voluntary

contributions from Member States. We would therefore favour strengthening the financing of DDR programmes through the expansion of measures covered under the budget for peacekeeping operations.

Finally, let me say that small arms is an issue that, above most others, requires strong political will and leadership. We in the Council have made a good start, but we still have a good distance to go.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on small arms and light weapons, and we also wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for introducing the report.

We have carefully studied the Secretary-General's report on small arms, as well as the recommendations contained therein. We are grateful for the fact that it contains a number of proposals put forward by our delegation.

To a large extent, we agree with what has been said at today's meeting and with the concerns expressed and the assessments and proposals made. The Russian Federation calls for the strengthening of the coordinating role of the United Nations in the quest for solutions to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Recently we have focused our attention on a range of related issues. A great deal of research has been done with the assistance of governmental experts in elaborating recommendations in this area, and the General Assembly has adopted a number of important resolutions. This was highlighted by the holding in 2001 of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, at which a Programme of Action was adopted. We expect that the meeting scheduled for 2003 on this issue will constitute the next important step in this area.

We are convinced that the fundamental work done on this track must continue to be carried out within the framework of the prescribed formats.

With respect to the role of the Security Council, it is our conviction that the Council must focus its attention primarily on those instances in which the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is directly linked to conflict situations that are on the Council's agenda. We believe that the presidential statement adopted in August 2001 during a meeting of the Council chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia accurately reflects this.

The Russian Federation has consistently called for the introduction of tough measures in those cases in which arms are being delivered to illegitimate regimes or to armed groups. At the time, together with the United States, we initiated the imposition of an embargo on arms deliveries to the Taliban. As events have shown, that measure was fully warranted and helped to bring about the fall of the terrorist regime in Afghanistan.

We see a similar positive impact in cases such as those of Angola, Sierra Leone and a number of other conflicts. This experience has shown once again that the Security Council is well placed to take effective measures. At the same time, we must step up the monitoring of Security Council embargoes on arms deliveries and, if reliable information emerges regarding violations of such embargoes, the relevant sanctions committee must immediately oversee an investigation of the facts.

In the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations, peace agreements among parties need to set out clearly the parameters of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, and peacekeeping mandates must include a practicable and adequately resourced component by which to collect and destroy illegal small arms and light weapons in close interaction with the parties to the conflict. We fully agree with and support the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on this matter.

We believe it important to continue to focus particular attention on finding specific and practicable measures to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons on a preventive basis and in the post-conflict phase of conflict settlement. In that regard, we believe that the accumulated experience of regional organizations in resolving this issue would be very helpful. The Security Council should call on all Member States to engage in closer cooperation in this sphere, with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization of American States, the African Union, the League of Arab States and other organizations, and should ensure their practical interaction and the coordination of their action on specific regional problems. A good example

of such interaction would be the opening in Belgrade of a centre, under United Nations Development Programme auspices, for information exchange on small arms and light weapons under the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe.

The Council must pay particular attention to mobilizing external resources so that the international community can provide technical and financial assistance to the countries most affected by the problem of the excessive spread and destabilizing stockpiling of small arms and light weapons. The absence of or deficiencies in domestic legislation to curtail the illegal circulation of small arms and light weapons substantially complicates the achievement of a regional or global solution. We must do all we can to encourage action to refine and codify national export control regimes with a view to organizing wide-ranging exchanges of information among States regarding existing legislation and practices in this sphere.

Mr. Doutriaux (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, I wish to thank you for organizing this debate on small arms. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report and Mr. Dhanapala for his supplementary comments.

France associates itself fully with the statement that will be made by Denmark, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union. I will therefore confine my comments to two important points. First of all, the Security Council must, of course, lend its full support to measures taken by Member States to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted on 20 July 2001 in New York.

For the first time in the history of arms control, a consensus text was adopted covering small arms and light weapons and including a Programme of Action. Those measures must now be implemented. Meetings are to take place biennially; next year's will enable us to take stock and to prepare the 2006 review conference. Along those lines, the formulation of an international instrument to identify illicit supply lines and to ensure the traceability of small arms should be encouraged by the Council. Such an instrument would meet our ongoing concerns with regard to the implementation of arms embargoes and peace-building programmes in crisis situations fed by illicit arms flows. The group of governmental experts established to study the feasibility of an international instrument, and voluntary cooperation among Member States on this topic, deserve our full support. The work done by France and Switzerland on certain aspects of these issues will be food for thought.

In terms of following up the 2001 Conference, I would also like to mention the wish of many States, African States in particular, whose unstinting commitment to the success of the Conference we hail; they have asked for fresh consideration of arms transfers to non-State entities, which bear such a large part of the responsibility for promoting conflicts, especially in Africa. I refer here to what was just said by the representatives of Mauritius, the United States and Guinea with respect to various conflict situations in Africa in the Mano river and the Great Lakes regions.

Secondly, because of the Security Council's responsibility to maintain international peace and security, we are directly concerned with respect to the illicit trafficking of light weapons in situations of which the Council is seized.

I will not belabour the essential nature of programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants for the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations. The reform begun in 2000 on the basis of the recommendations of the Brahimi report (S/2000/809) has enabled us to learn from our experience on the ground and as much as possible to concentrate the attention of the principal players and donors on this crucial phase of establishing a momentum for peace. The representative of Mauritius also stressed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, particularly in the Great Lakes region.

Another important dimension of this question — embargoes and sanctions monitoring mechanisms — should also be a focus of our attention. We recall that France and the United Kingdom had proposed the establishment of a permanent sanctions monitoring mechanism in order to get a more realistic idea of the trafficking in all its complexity and ramifications, especially when this trafficking of small arms is fuelled by the illegal exploitation of natural resources or other items of trade. The work of France and the United Kingdom parallels that of Colombia on integrating and better coordinating the activities of the various panels of the sanctions Committees. In that respect, I thank

Ambassador Valdivieso for the non-paper that he circulated among Council members.

The Council must be able to look at ways to improve the effectiveness of arms embargoes and in particular to learn all the lessons it can from the sanctions Committees. Henceforth, it could be pointed out that the practice of publicly naming the traffickers and their key go-betweens who are violating embargoes has borne fruit and should be further developed. We are led to conclude that the networks at the core of that traffic are not innumerable and the threads of the web often lead to the same individuals. The Security Council should call on the States concerned to take the measures necessary to effectively suppress actions that violate United Nations embargoes.

Regarding a subject of such great importance, given its diverse dimensions and often technical nature, the Council should continue its reflection and its work by experts, particularly in conjunction with the sanctions Committees.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Allow me first to thank the Secretary-General for a very substantial report to the Council with several concrete recommendations. They deserve our close attention and support.

The spread of illicit small arms and light weapons is a global threat to human security, human rights and international humanitarian law. The great majority of victims are innocent and vulnerable civilians, and children in particular are paying a heavy price.

Besides the humanitarian toll, illicit small arms and light weapons undermine peace-building efforts as well as conflict prevention. We are concerned that unregistered arms transfers to conflict regions seem to continue unabated. We are also seeing massive exploitation of natural resources for the purchase of arms. The link to organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism underscores the urgency of dealing effectively with illicit small arms.

The good news is that the international community is addressing the issue and the Security Council has a key role to play in that respect. Preventing and combating the uncontrolled spread of small arms must be an integral part of the Council's peace efforts. That should constitute a key task for the Council in discharging its primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security.

Combating illicit traffic is essential in order to succeed in peace-building and conflict prevention. Recommendations 7 and 8 in the report are important in that regard. Provisions for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and weapons collection should be considered in the context of negotiated settlements and by the Council in peacekeeping mandates. By including DDR in budgets for peacekeeping operations, we ensure a more solid financial basis for those crucial activities. The case of Sierra Leone illustrates fully the importance of DDR as a part of overall peace-building efforts. Sierra Leone also illustrates the weakness of voluntary funding of DDR programmes. In general, it is particularly important in the fight against illicit arms to form partnerships between affected countries and regions and those who can offer assistance, technically and financially. That problem is a challenge to us all.

Dealing with the supply of arms is obviously just as important as collecting illicit weapons in conflict areas. We agree that arms embargoes should be used more vigorously and expeditiously. The Council must continue to promote the effective implementation of arms embargoes, for instance, through sanctions Committees and expert panels. As illustrated by Colombia's paper prepared for this discussion, the panels have made a number of specific proposals for strengthening arms embargoes. The Council should consider how those recommendations could be taken forward. The violation of sanctions is a serious challenge, and decisive action should be considered against States that deliberately violate arms embargoes.

This leads me to the issue of tracing, which is critical to identifying the origin and supply routes of illicit weapons to conflict areas. We support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Council should call for the preparation of an international instrument on tracing. Important work has already been initiated in this field; for instance, the establishment of a United Nations expert group to examine the feasibility of developing such an instrument. We are convinced that that expert group would benefit from the initiative taken by France and Switzerland to develop elements for a political arrangement on tracing and marking. Other challenges for the Council include cooperation against illicit arms brokering and efforts to strengthen export controls and transparency in armaments.

The United Nations Secretariat will have an important support function to fulfil for the Council and Member States in dealing with illicit small arms and light weapons. We note the Secretary-General's intention in recommendation 3 to set up a small arms advisory service within the Department for Disarmament Affairs based on extrabudgetary resources. If such a service is to provide added value, it should primarily have a coordinating and advocacy function. We strongly emphasize that such a service should not develop operational capacity and duplicate what others are already doing well. The Council should continue its discussion of questions related to illicit small arms. It might be useful to consider if any of the particular issues raised in the report and in today's discussion would lend themselves to a more focused debate in the Council at a later stage. That discussion could take place partly in connection with the drafting of a presidential statement, as proposed by Colombia.

Mr. Broucher (United Kingdom): Allow me, at the outset, to thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to have this important debate. Let me also thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for introducing the Secretary-General's report and the delegation of Colombia for its thought-provoking paper. In making this national statement now, the United Kingdom also wishes to associate itself with the statement that Denmark will make on behalf of the European Union.

The serious threat to security caused by the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons is all too well known. There is an urgent need for the international community to continue to implement the United Nations Programme of Action, to reduce the estimated 639 million small arms and light weapons in circulation and to reduce the estimated 500,000 deaths caused by them each year.

The 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and the adoption of the Programme of Action demonstrate the resolve and commitment of the international community to tackle the problems caused by small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action also highlights the role that can be played by the Security Council in implementing the campaign against small arms proliferation and misuse. The Security Council has an important part to play in helping to mainstream small arms and light weapons issues. We therefore welcome the publication of the Secretary-General's report and support its recommendations.

Turning to some of the specific points in the report, the Security Council should continue to encourage all Member States to implement the United Nations Programme of Action at a national, regional and global level and to allocate sufficient and appropriate resources to that task.

We would find it useful to have clarification on the funding, remit and relationship with national points of contact of any small arms advisory service that may be established by the Department for Disarmament Affairs under recommendation 3.

The United Kingdom supports recommendation 5. We also support the proposal at recommendation 8 to strengthen the financing of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes by the expansion of measures covered under peacekeeping operations, although we are mindful of the implications such a step could have on available resources.

In our view, there is still valuable work to be done under recommendation 6.

When looking at end-user certificates in recommendation 9, more needs to be done to ensure the authenticity of the certificate and to protect against goods being diverted from their intended destination. Exporting countries need to assess the genuine needs of the end user before despatch. The United Kingdom, working through its diplomatic posts abroad, has a mechanism in place to confirm the accuracy of information contained in end-user certificates. We would be prepared to consider exchanging information on a more systematic, case-by-case, bilateral basis with others.

The United Kingdom is sympathetic to the call for some standardization of end-user certificates. The European Union and Wassenaar Arrangement have already undertaken some useful work in this area. We agree that the certificate should include the name and address of the signing authority, but to add contact details for brokers would not work.

Concluding my remarks on the recommendations, the United Kingdom fully supports the reporting requirements in recommendation 12.

More generally, we would also encourage the Security Council to consult more widely with relevant

organizations such as the G-8, Roma-Lyon and the New Partnership for Africa's Development when it is considering specific country or regional situations. Informal meetings between the Secretary-General and regional organizations could be used as opportunities, or have an element within them, to specifically focus on small arms issues, the outcome of which could then be reported back to this forum.

I would also like to make a couple of points about the recommendations contained in the Colombian paper. We will maintain a register of all arms brokers, but for us it is not the bureaucratic act of registration that counts so much as the ability to scrutinize and to approve or refuse licenses. Regulation of deals made by brokers is the key. The United Kingdom would also welcome further clarity as to whether any international standards that might be formulated on transfer of ownership of arms consignments apply to domestic or international transfers, or to both. The United Kingdom applies the criteria set out in the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports to assess whether an international transfer of arms is permissible. We recommend the development of rigorous export criteria controls on similar lines. We also maintain a database of export licence applicants, but it is not exclusive to arms transfers.

We consider that it is important to strengthen the ability of the Security Council and the Sanctions Committee to monitor implementation and enforcement of sanctions. Ad hoc United Nations expert units and monitoring mechanisms have played a valuable role in naming and shaming sanctions busters and in focusing on how sanctions could be improved. But their ad hoc nature means the Council does not have an institutional memory, and important recommendations such as those contained in the Colombian paper are not followed up. Jointly with France, we have proposed establishing a permanent monitoring mechanism under the authority of the Security Council to achieve this. The mechanism would build on the work of ad hoc United Nations expert panels and monitoring mechanisms by giving the United Nations a permanent capacity to monitor the enforcement of sanctions. We hope that Security Council members can support that important initiative.

We like the recommendation to introduce legislation to regulate the leasing of aircraft used in transporting small arms. United Kingdom legislation already makes it an offence to use any United Kingdom registered aircraft without a licence, or for United Kingdom persons to charter an aircraft for the carriage of arms to a destination subject to a United Nations arms embargo. That also applies to shipping. We do not believe it necessary to adopt such regulations for destinations not subject to arms embargoes.

In the West African region, we consider it appropriate to strengthen and support the efforts against small arms of the Economic Community of West African States. We support Security Council measures to clamp down on those producer countries seeking to flood the region with weapons.

In closing, I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for distributing his draft document. We will, of course, give it our full consideration and give our views in due course.

It is right that the prevention, combating and elimination of the spread of small arms and light weapons is a priority for the Security Council. It is ours, too. To this end, we have committed £19.5 million to a number of programmes and projects over the next three years. On 6 May this year, we signed the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms. The Secretary-General could also encourage other countries to do the same. The United Kingdom will actively participate in assessing developments and results of the United Nations Programme of Action at the forthcoming biennial meetings and at the Review Conference in 2006.

We look forward to working with the Security Council and others to operationalize the recommendations in the report and, by so doing, to move another significant and substantive step forward in the fight against illicit small arms and light weapons.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this open meeting. I would also like to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for introducing the Secretary-General's report and for his briefing this morning. We also note the important role that Colombia has played on this issue, and we are in the process of studying their paper, as well.

Disarmament efforts in the past tended to focus on weapons of mass destruction. At the very most, we concentrated on increasing transparency on major items of conventional military equipment such as tanks and artillery. But in so doing, we ignored the world's real killers. It is not tanks, fighter aircraft or high-tech

weapons that cause the most deaths and injuries. Instead, most conflicts around the world have been fuelled by simple pistols, rifles and machine guns.

The Secretary-General has described illicit small arms and light weapons as weapons of mass destruction in terms of the carnage that they have caused. The latest statistics of the United Nations show that at least half a million people die each year as a result of small arms and light weapons. What is even more disturbing is that most of those killed are civilians, the vast majority being women and children.

According to the Secretary-General's report, there are more than 639 million small arms floating around. Of those, more than 40 per cent are illicit. In the hands of non-State actors such as terrorists and criminals, those weapons are forces of destruction to be reckoned with.

I would like to compare the flow of small arms to a river. If harnessed correctly it can be damned up to provide hydroelectric power and be an important source of water. Similarly, small arms used in a legitimate context can be wielded to ensure law and order. Just as water is essential for our survival, legitimate small arms are crucial for a country's self-defence. But, like a river that bursts its banks during a monsoon, a flood of illicit small arms can also leave death and destruction in its wake. Like water, too, small arms are inexpensive and easily available. In some places, the deadly AK-47 assault rifle will set you back by as little as $6. That is what commuters pay each day to drive into Manhattan. That same rifle can be obtained for a bag of grain in other parts of the world. These weapons are also easy to use. A child can be taught to use one in a single lesson, and these weapons — unlike tanks, aircraft or artillery guns — are also easy to conceal and transport. And, as we all know, these weapons are lethal.

Concerned countries and non-governmental organizations have asserted that illicit small arms and light weapons are a threat to peace and development, democracy and human rights. Illicit arms destabilize regions, exacerbate conflicts, obstruct relief programmes, undermine peace initiatives and foster a culture of violence and impunity. Given the global emphasis on combating terrorism, I would be remiss if I did not also mention the role of small arms in relation to terrorism. Certainly, terrorists can and do use such weapons to carry out heinous acts against the innocent.

In recent times, the United Nations and the international community — clearly aware of the dangers of having a swollen river burst its banks — have taken reinforcement action. The adoption of the Programme of Action at last year's United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Council's presidential statement reinforcing the Programme of Action are examples of this. When the Council asked the Secretary-General to recommend ways that it could contribute to combating illicit small arms and light weapons in the issues under its consideration, the Council was also in fact commissioning architectural plans for yet another embankment.

In our statement last year, we made two key points about the Council's role in combating illicit small arms. We are pleased to see that the Secretary-General has elaborated on these in his report. We said that the Security Council could contribute first by giving teeth to our arms embargoes through more stringent implementation and monitoring of such embargoes. Secondly, we could focus on more disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Our logic was simple: We need to slow the flood of small arms and light weapons being channelled into conflict or post-conflict regions. We also have to mop up the reservoir of weapons already in those regions. However, as all of us know, this is much more easily said than done. Nonetheless, one year on, the Security Council appears to be going in the right direction.

It is heartening that the Council has, through the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and panels of experts, taken concrete action to strengthen the enforcement of its arms embargoes to dam up the flow of weapons into conflict and post-conflict regions. There is a Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA; Panels of Experts on Liberia and, most recently, Somalia; and, of course, a Monitoring Group mandated by resolution 1390 (2002) on the sanctions against the Taliban and Al-Qa'idah. It is laudable that the Council has set up such monitoring mechanisms and panels to enforce its sanctions. However, the terms of reference for such bodies is arbitrary. For example, there is a permanent Monitoring Mechanism on Sanctions against UNITA, but only ad hoc Panels were set up for Liberia and Sierra Leone. Surely, the West African countries are just as important as countries in southern Africa.

Many of the recommendations made by these monitoring mechanisms or panels are also similar. For consistency and to avoid duplication, the Council should consider a permanent monitoring mechanism to deal with all the arms embargoes that it has imposed. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General has hinted in his report, there are frequent and flagrant violations of the Council's arms embargoes. Indeed, it is often the same States and international non-State actors that violate our various arms embargoes. This reinforces what we and other Council members have pointed out in the past — that the Council cannot enforce sanctions in a vacuum. Just as dams and embankments are not built by the architect and the engineer alone, stemming the torrent of illicit small arms will need to be a coordinated effort between the Council, regional organizations, Member States and civil society. The Council needs help from Member States for the effective implementation and monitoring of these embargoes.

We have also made some progress in soaking up the weapons already in the hands of former combatants. All of us know that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration are crucial in post-conflict societies. The Council has also emphasized disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Ex-combatants respond well to non-monetary incentives — such as tools, schools, construction materials, health care services and road repairs — to the voluntary surrender of weapons. Consequently, we have had some success in the fields of disarmament and demobilization.

However, our biggest challenge lies in the reintegration of ex-combatants. As one Special Representative of the Secretary-General has noted, the focus of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration should be reversed to reintegration, disarmament and demobilization. Unless ex-combatants are given the opportunity to reintegrate into society, they will find it difficult or have few incentives to lay down their arms and demobilize. Our record in this area is sketchy. This is a difficult area in which the United Nations role will overlap with that of Governments and in which peacekeeping and peace-building will overlap with development.

We should discuss the ways in which the Security Council can provide support to the relevant United Nations agencies and work with other principal organs of the United Nations, such as the Economic and Social Council, to tackle this multifaceted issue. For example, we need to consider what can be done to sharpen the focus on retraining and finding jobs for such men, women and children. We need to consider what can be done to find a space for the ex-combatants and for their communities to reabsorb them. We need to look at the coordination between peacekeeping operations and the efforts of other United Nations agencies and at how they can be improved. Finally, we also need to consider what are the benchmarks to determine when the responsibility of the Security Council should or could end so that the conflict will not re-emerge. These are key questions that we should ponder as we go about our business.

The easy availability of illicit small arms and light weapons has already caused much death and destruction. The Council will need to work with all members, non-governmental organizations and civil society to tackle this difficult problem. According to Buddha, "there are two mistakes that we can make: not going all the way and not starting." I am pleased to say that we have avoided the latter. Members that have spoken before us — and I am also sure that the speakers to follow will do the same — have given many useful ideas on how to bring this issue forward. Like other colleagues, we would like to express our willingness to seriously consider these suggestions when we discuss the draft presidential statement that you, Sir, have circulated.

The meeting was suspended at 12.40 p.m.